

Summary:

The purpose of the distance learning/online course policy is to set procedures and guidelines regarding the use of online courses through the, independent study programs, and other distance learning/online course providers not already approved by the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE).

For the purposes of this policy, distance learning is defined as a technological delivery model in which regularly scheduled real-time instruction occurs during the school day where students and instructors are not in the same place and in which a Mississippi-certified teacher is responsible for providing instruction. Online learning is defined as a delivery model that is an interactive computer-based and internet-connected learning environment in which students are separated from their teachers by time or location or both and in which a Mississippi-certified teacher is responsible for providing instruction. Blended learning is defined as a hybrid instructional delivery model where pupils are provided face-to-face instruction in part at a supervised school facility away from home and in part in a computer-based, internet-connected learning environment with some degree of pupil control over time, location, and pace of instruction and in which a Mississippi-certified teacher is responsible for providing instruction.

1. For all distance and online courses not already approved by the Mississippi Department of Education, Jackson County School District will submit an application to the MDE for approval to ensure that the vendor/provider's content, curriculum, and assessments are aligned to Mississippi's course standards. Jackson County School District is responsible for determining course funding structure. In order to count as a credit toward graduation, course codes must be listed in the *Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi*. Enrollment in such courses must have prior approval by the principal.

For blended learning courses in which Jackson County School District provides a face-to-face Mississippi-certified teacher, no prior approval from the MDE is required. For online programs or computer-assisted instruction in which Jackson County School District is using for the sole purpose of credit recovery, no prior approval from the MDE is required. For online dual enrollment courses through a Mississippi Community College or Institution of Higher Learning, no prior approval from the MDE is required. A separate agreement with the college or institution will be maintained by Jackson County School District.

2. Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, Jackson County School District shall develop and implement a distance learning/online course policy and handbook guidance that has been adopted by the local school board and that includes the rules, regulations, and processes for online courses. The rules, regulations, and processes shall be available to faculty, students, and parents/guardians.

- a. At a minimum, Jackson County School District will ensure the following:
  - i. Teachers are licensed by the Mississippi Department of Education to teach the respective course;
  - ii. Background checks are conducted for the teachers;
  - iii. The content, curriculum, and assessments for each course are aligned to the competencies, objectives and standards of the respective Mississippi course;
  - iv. Appropriate course codes are used;
  - v. A facilitator is assigned to assist students;
  - vi. Students have access to the technology needed for courses;
  - vii. Students have all instructional materials needed for courses;
  - viii. The district grading policy is followed;
  - ix. Students enrolled in the courses take the required state assessments where applicable; and
  - x. Documentation is maintained on file at the central office.
- b. At a minimum, the Jackson County School District student handbook shall include the following:

- i. The process for notifying parents about the program;
- ii. Minimum criteria to determine eligibility for participation;
- iii. The number of distance learning/online courses that students can take at one time;
- iv. If the distance learning/online course program can be used for credit recovery and/or remediation;
- v. The courses by grade level and content area for the distance learning/online program; and
- vi. The process for monitoring student progress and notifying parents of student progress during the course.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-1-3, 37-161-3* (Adopted 1/2016)